

*Capital Punishment*

compete. In hockey, football and baseball games today we have all the children competing and trying to win, pitting one against the other and against the other kids who cannot play. We have lost the situation in which we have creative play. I simply suggest that is another factor that adds to the stress level, and the stress level is the background to many of the dangerous situations we have today.

Let us look at some of these factors as they relate to the suggestion that we pay more attention to behaviour than to the punishment factor. We have the researchers Braginsky and Braginsky who have pointed out as follows:

Jobless men feel small, and talk the language of insignificance. Even if a new job patches up self-esteem, they still hurt from a gut-level cynicism about society.

The article goes on at quite some length and points out that those who are at the lower edge of the economic bracket, and those in a jobless state, suffer considerably more stress and also have a higher ratio of crime and violent crime. I simply point out that the record of our government has not been strong at all in terms of looking after the economy in order to provide meaningful employment for people. If this government took the view that it should focus more on the factors that affect behaviour, and paid less attention to other things, it would perhaps not have to focus so much attention on the question of the nature of punishment. We can review this whole situation again from the point of view of economic worry. Another article by Berkeley Rice points out:

Not surprisingly, economic fear builds a boom in mental illness, alcoholism and suicide. The news is that government planners don't worry enough about the psychic and medical cost of recession.

In this regard we find that whenever we have economic slumps or a lack of meaningful employment, or when we have high rates of inflation, the government has to take a good portion of the blame for the increase in violence that coincidentally takes place in society. That, too, is one of the factors we ought to be looking at in terms of decreasing violent crime.

The position that we have a formula involving behaviour, reward and punishment with an increase in violent crime in society, and therefore that we should focus on the punishment situation, is a completely misunderstood concept. I would suggest, again, that any government which wants to be an abolitionist government must earn that right. Obviously, the cultural system we live in that places punishment itself in relation to the shaping of behaviour is lost on a public which will never accept that until the government has earned the right through creating a state of real peace and security in our Canadian society. Another article points out the following:

When the University of Michigan's research center for group dynamics interviewed 2,000 men, they found that the traditional killers of the industrial revolution—long hours, heavy workloads, and pressing responsibilities—now produce less anxiety, stress, and physical illness than do seemingly easier work conditions.

What this really points out is simply that those who have boring jobs have a much higher rate or level of mental and physical stress. Let us look at some other aspects to which the government has failed to apply itself in terms of putting its focus on the entire area of behaviour, reward and punishment pattern as a total package rather than just focusing on the capital punishment question. Let us con-

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sider television and its effect on the over-all behaviour pattern of our children.

It has long been recognized that this was a potential danger, and in recent years studies in this area have clearly indicated that violent television programs have in fact caused children to play in a more aggressive manner. The play patterns of children, in turn, effect both the skills and attitudes of the adult organism as it develops from childhood. The great French researcher, Piaget, notes that play helps the child to assimilate the world and shapes his concept of reality. In this way we find that a child's play pattern is developed and influenced by television, and as that child grows this becomes his perspective of reality and what the world in which he lives is like. Likewise, the French primatologist, Jean Claude Fady, has demonstrated the direct correlation between play and reasoned attitudes in serious behaviour. Again, Kathy Sylva and Paul Genova, at Harvard University, have very closely linked children's play patterns to the acquisition of skills and problem solving abilities. I simply put this forward because it has been clearly demonstrated that television plays a very important role in how children develop their subsequent attitudes toward adult society and life.

It is important to note here that when we are talking about violence in our society we are not simply talking about the question of whether we should have capital punishment. I suggest it may not make an iota of difference, whether or not we have capital punishment, to our rate of violence; but I believe it is important that this House should begin to recognize that if we are to have a parliamentary system that listens at all to its constituents, and if we are to recognize the mood of the nation as such and understand its demands, we must do certain things before we begin to talk about this being an abolitionist state.

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To those who take the position that they can act irrespective of the views of their constituents, I simply ask: What are constituents for, if they are not to be listened to? In spite of the fact that we have the understanding and ability to provide the stimuli that would enhance a generation of free and creative children, we are content to marinate their young minds in a never-ending sea of violence. That violence, in turn, stimulates play patterns that are aggressive. How can we help but have a violent society when many of our building blocks are cemented together with a violent language and a violent art? I suggest it is the character of North America that we have a violent background to our cultural structure. In *Psychology Today* for April, 1976, in an article entitled "The Scarey World of TV's Heavy Viewer", researchers Gerbner and Gross made the following statement:

We have found that people who watch a lot of TV see the real world as more dangerous and frightening than those who watch very little. Heavy viewers are less trustful of their fellow citizens and more fearful of the real world.

I think that bears some review in respect of what is happening in society today. Again, in another research article they say they have demonstrated that the heavy viewing of television does influence the viewer's perception of the world and the common distortions of television become perceived as reality by the viewer. It has been